

Your Fair Housing Rights

Department of Housing and
Community Development

If You've Heard This . . .

DHCD Mission:

- To facilitate the production and preservation of housing,
- To enhance community and economic development opportunities through partnerships with for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and
- To leverage DHCD funds with other financing sources to:
 - create and maintain stable neighborhoods
 - retain and expand the city's tax base
 - promote economic opportunities through community empowerment, and
 - retain and create job and business opportunities for the benefit of Washington, DC residents

In Housing, DHCD:

- Increases homeownership opportunities by offering financial assistance to low and moderate-income residents
- Supports efforts to maintain affordable housing opportunities, and
- Promotes the purchase and renovation of aging and abandoned houses.

In Economic Development:

- DHCD's activities focus on generating new business opportunities that create jobs and give residents easy access to quality retail products and services.

This brochure was published by the District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The work that provided the basis for this publication was granted under the Fair Housing Initiatives Program—Education and Outreach Initiative (FHIP—EOI) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

DHCD has printed “Your Fair Housing Rights” brochures covering

- Race, Color and National Origin
- Familial Status
- Disability
- Religion
- Sex

Your Fair Housing Rights brochures are also available in Spanish and Vietnamese.

To obtain more brochures you may contact:
District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development
801 North Capitol Street NE
Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20002
Tel.: (202) 442-7200
Fax: (202) 535-1392
Internet address: www.dhcd.dc.gov



Housing
Discrimination
on the Basis of
**RACE, COLOR,
NATIONAL ORIGIN**
is Against the Law!



“It takes 30 days to check your credit . . .”

“We’ve decided to take the house off the market temporarily . . .”

“I think you would be happier in a different neighborhood . . .”

“I need to see your legal documents before giving you an application . . .”

“The apartment already has a deposit on it . . .”

“I don’t make the decisions. Just fill out the rental application and we’ll let you know if you are accepted . . .”

It Could be Discrimination



Government of the District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor
Stanley Jackson, Director

Race, Color, National Origin

The Laws

Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. §3601 et seq., Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 with the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988) The law prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing on the bases of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and handicap.

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 states that ALL housing—public and privately owned or managed, must be sold or rented without regard to a person's race or color (Also refer to U.S. Supreme Court decision, Jones v. Mayer).

The D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977 provides additional protections not covered under the Fair Housing Act. It protects on the basis of age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, source of income, or place of residence or business.



Common Forms of Discrimination:

Refusal to rent, sell or Negotiate for housing—because of your race, color or national origin.

Steering—offering housing choices ONLY in certain neighborhoods selected by the realtor.

Misrepresenting the availability of Housing—stating housing is unavailable when in fact it is available.

Setting different terms, conditions or privileges for the sale or rental of housing—you are made to meet greater income requirements, charged higher rent, additional fees or security deposit, and/or do not get needed repairs.

Discriminatory Advertisement—advertising to preferred groups of people only.

Blockbusting—real estate agents persuade owners to sell or rent by telling them that minority groups are moving into the neighborhood.

Discrimination in Mortgage Lending, Property insurance or appraisals—Refusal of information about home mortgage loans, denial of the loan, or imposition of different terms or conditions on the loan; denial of property insurance; or conducting property appraisals in a discriminatory manner.

Use of Threats, Intimidation, or Coercion—any attempts to stop you from renting or buying a house in a neighborhood that is racially or ethnically different from you, stating that neighbors do not want people of your color or ethnic background in their community.

Residential Housing Covered by the Fair Housing Act:

- Singlefamily homes owned by private persons using a real estate broker and/or discriminatory advertising to sell/rent the home.
- Singlefamily homes NOT owned by private persons (e.g., corporations or partnerships) even if a broker is not used to sell or rent the home.
- Multifamily dwellings with five or more units, including rooming houses.
- Multifamily dwellings with four or less units, if the owner DOES NOT live in one of the units.

Housing Which is not Covered:

The law does not apply to noncommercial housing run by religious organizations and private clubs that limit occupancy solely to members.

What If You Are Not a U.S. Citizen:

You do not have to be a U.S. Citizen to file a complaint. The Fair Housing Act protects all people, regardless of immigration status, from illegal housing discrimination. However, if you are an undocumented resident there are greater risks involved in taking legal action. If you are concerned that your lack of legal immigration status may prompt a landlord to report you to the INS, carefully consider all options before pursuing a complaint. If a landlord does threaten to report a complaining tenant or prospective tenants to INS in retaliation, such action can be prevented by the use of an injunction, but only for the duration of the fair housing case. A landlord can not be prevented from



threatening to or actually reporting someone to INS when the case closes, regardless of the outcome. You should consult with an immigration and civil rights attorney before you take any action.

Time Limit to File a Complaint:

You must file an administrative complaint with HUD within one year of the housing discrimination. You have two years to file a federal civil court action. If you are able to prove that you have been a victim of housing/lending discrimination, the Fair Housing Act may entitle you to receive compensation for actual damages, including humiliation, pain and suffering and other relief. If you win a federal civil court lawsuit, the law may also allow you to receive punitive damages.

Where to File a Complaint if your Rights Have Been Violated:

You may file a complaint with . . .
On the Federal Level . . .

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
1-800-669-9777, TDD 1-800-927-9275
www.hud.gov

On the Local Level . . .

D.C. Office of Human Rights (OHR)
441 4th Street NW, Suite 570N
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 727-4559
www.ohr.dc.gov